Early Americans Frowned On Christmas

By DENNIS MONTGOMERY

Associated Press Writer In rustic English the strait jaced Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Colony solemnly outlawed that panel neterious of axerilegious celebrations, Christmas.

"For preventing disorders arising in severall. places within this jurisdiction, by reason of some still observing such ffestivalls as were superstillously kept in other countrys, to the great dishonner of God & offence of others," the General Court statule of 1539 read, "it is therefore. ordered by this court and the authority Increof, that whospever shall be found observing any such day as Christmas or the like. citizen by forbearing lacour, deasting or any other way .. every such person so offending shall pay for every such offence flue shalungs

OUTLAWED in England from 1647 to 1660 under Oliver Cromwell, Christmas found no reluge in New England. Gov. William Bedford while of the Palgrima' hrst American Christmas. p 1820: 'Manday, the 25th day we went on share, some to fell tym-Ser, some in saw, some to rive and some to carry: so no mail resled all that day."

Spying some children at play on Christmas in 1621. Redford confistated their toys and turned them in to their parents

Nevertheless, the first Christmas celebrated in the New World by English colonists, near Jamestown at Varginia of 1607, had been more elaxed Captain John Smith, leader of the band af Anglican settlers.

Bicentenn

"The extreme words. rayne, frost and snow caused us to keep Christmas among the ravages where we were never more marrie nor fidde on more plenty of good oveters, fish, flesh sold foule, and good bread nor ever had better fires in England."

COLONIAL Puntant Baptists, Qualters and Presbytenans, finding on scriptural stanction of Christmas big plenty of pagan precedent in the December automalias di Roine, steadfastly opposed its observance.

Though the Massachusetts ban was repealed in 1851, the day was not freely observed in New England, save at an Anglican sanctuary in Rhode Island, until 1750

Stoman Catholica. Lutherans. Germans and Dutch dissenters and the Anglican settlers of the Middle and Southern color nies were rather less concerted with the tant of ancient heatherisms.

in the South, particuladly, the season was celebrated as a two-week affair - the 12 cays of Christmas -- marked by the firing of moskets and cinnun feasting visiting. weddings, eard playing. distreng, eine fideling gossip and a Puritan coserved, 'such like foot-

"NOTHING IS NOW to be beard of in remessition a Virginia cofor noted in 1773. "But the balls the low hunts, the time gateriani nects and the good fellowship which are to W exhibited at the approaching Christmas "

in W.Learnsburg, there was the "grand sliumingtoon." A multin fife and dram corps depend torches in a community bonser and murched house to house commanding the master to light candles in his windows.

Indoors on the grouning board - a table named for the noise it made under its burden - there were baked hurs, bacon, peaned soop chestnuts. scalloped system, furkey, roast beef, game and manue pies, spoon bread, sweet gotatoes, pism punding, fruit cake, dark beer. Maderia and madec cider.

COUNTRY gentry gathered at a preminent man's home, generally a relative, for an equally eriravague: and extended feast It was all one of these that a spirited fiddier named Patrak Henry and a young student named Thomas Jeffersie met. Climasing his celebration of the scoon. se 1759, George Washington took a wife on the title day. Jefferson did the same to 1772.

North or South there

was little gift-giving Servasts might have the day off and a small gift the next day. Children expected a gift or two and the poor were find There were yok logs, but apart from mistletoe balls, probably few docorations.

From the Muddle Colonics came many of the traditions of our modern Christman, including Christinas trees and Santa Claus. The Dutch of New Amsterdam gave the snason semilegal sunction in 1654 by recessing Manhattan's goverament for three weeks. It wasn't until 1856 in Georgia that the holiday attained legal status.

EVENTUALLY with the arrival of more settlers and the rise of nondenominational concerns, even New Englanders relaxed. By the time Washington crossed the Delaware on Christmas Eve of 1776, these sents Heritage book of ments first published in the Revolution. the Vinginia Gazette 10 years before, probably res-

vailed in most American households:

- "Now Christmas comes, 'tis fit that we
- "Should feast and sing and merry be;
- "Keep open house, let fiedlers play.
- "A fig for cold, sing care. away:
- "And may they who therest report.
- "On brown bread and small beer dine."

The AP writer inplies all Colonists were colehrating Christmas by the time of the War for Independence, However, see the artfole below with information gleaned from the Amprican

A "ERRISTMAS" VICTORY

It was German Catholics who were largely responsible for bringing the tree and other rituals of "Christmas" is America during the great German migrations of the 1800's.

Rowever, the first real "German" celebration of Christmas in America was by Hessian soldiers hired out to the British to help put down those 'pesky American rebels."

That first Serman "Christmas" was celebrated at Fenton, New Jersey in December of 1776.

On Christmas eve. while the Germans were celebrating themselves into a drunken stupor, General George Yashington, John Sullivan, Nathanael Greene, Henry Knox, James Monroe, and several thousand other Colon ial Patriots who did not celebrate Christmas, crossed the Delaware River in the freezing night, marched 9 miles to Trenton, and at dawn on Christmas day overpowered and captured the pleary. Christmas-morn Messian carrison.

The victory sent a shock wave of hope through the American Colonies. Disregarding Christmas had brought the free men of America a much needed victory.

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PURITANS who tried to kill Christmas were assigned piaces in miseting houses on the box's at sicial status.

The Law That Banned Christmas For 22 Years By The Rev WIRE GARRISON

Radical Protestant emerchman lated to kill Christmas in The 17th Century by outlawing in a epistion on both sides of the Atlantic

property (Catholic) frivolity at against this popish day. best, a work of Satan at worst

people regardless of their rebelow preferred a day of mergiving to one of work.

use the authorities had less trou- ed 12 years later. ble enforcing an auti-Christman

historium D.D. Demacest. actually they were a cartanger fense five shillings. one group of fervent believers. The law a preamble explained

Cothelicism, And hadn't Catho-fense of others." ikes, after all, celebrated Corist-JOHN OF CERTOFIES

mode Paritan Robert Brown its repeal.

"really means Christ-Mass"

in Massachusens, William Bradbard, second governor of the Plymouth Bay Colony was reearded as telling his officers. We To them the holiday was a most take the sternest measures

The December 25 of 1620 the But the law proved highly lifts spent in the New World by unpopular with both Catholics the Mayflower Piterima was and Protestants because most spent felling trees "in artist to avoid any frivolity on the stay sometimes called Christman

In England, the mother counry making, feasting and gift try an apti-Christmas law went into effect in 1643, when Puretan Pro-Christmas, riets tacked forces gained control of Parloss England in 1647 and 1649 before ment Widespread discontent with the country's holiday but was the bun forced the lawmakers to reveled, that in Massachusetts issue yearly proclamations of rea stronghold of radical Puritan- minder until the law was repeat

Then on May 11, 1659 in Massa law, which stayed in force for chaselts; the colemnat legislature passed its anti-heliday law, read We think of the Purmans as ing Whospever shall be found elea. Americans" wrote shorth observing any such day as Chr.si shall pay for every s-But mas

was had little or no tolerance for its purpose was "for preventing persons with different opinions" disorders (by observing such Highest on any good Puritan's festivals as were superstitiously of of intelerable stems was any-kept in other countries to the toping that smacked of Roman great dishonor of God and the of-

The law remained in force until 1601 when King Charles @ and The day called Christmas." his toyal commissioners forced

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How Holy Is Christmas?

Did you know that the first Christmas tree ercord in a charch in the United States, in 1851 shocked its Cleveland compagation? It was considered too heathernshi! History also recaileds that some early American Pontons even fortide the observance of Christmas as a holiday. Perhaps those Christmas were functive with a passure of Scripture found in Internals "For the memoriof the people are vain: for one current a tree out at the forest the work of the hands of the workman, will the acc. They dock a with silver and with gold, they fasten it with pads and with hummers, that it move not, They are uprigly as the palarties, but special unit. they must needs be borner, because they capped on By met alread of flow. Soo they cannot do exil, weather the is it in there is do good." Jeremak 10:2-8.

Dice are many of movertral questions about the calefration of Christian made it is not mentioned once in The Rible So. perhaps the year more than ever before, we should seek in answer as he have Constead since considered by Claristians to be a paguat iteladay, has informe so holy

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



Dear Santa, bless Mammy and Daddy and . . I mean, Dear God, bless Mommy and . . .